



Canadian Food  
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne  
d'inspection des aliments

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# Tips for Preventing Infections from **Pets and Petting Zoos**



Canada

Pets are like family members in many Canadian households. However, pet owners need to be careful when they handle their pets and pets' foods. Even if you don't own a pet, you need to be careful when you are around animals, like at a petting zoo.



## **What are zoonoses?**

- Zoonoses are diseases that are passed from animals to humans. People with weakened immune systems, the elderly and young children are more likely to get these.
- Some zoonoses are very dangerous to humans, like *E. coli* 0157:H7, salmonellosis, toxoplasmosis, tuberculosis and rabies.
- Doctors can usually treat people with zoonoses. However, some untreated zoonoses can be deadly.

## **How are zoonoses transmitted?**

You can get some zoonoses:

- By touching animals and not washing your hands right away.
- By not cooking meat and poultry to a safe temperature.
- Through animal scratches, bites and saliva.
- Through contact with animal feces and fecal dust.
- Through contact with animal coughs, sneezes or mucous.

## **How can I protect my family and myself?**

- Have a veterinarian check your pet for diseases.



# *Wash hands after touching pets*

- Set up a schedule of immunizations (shots) and de-worming for your pet.
- Keep your pet clean and well groomed. Keep your pet's claws trimmed.
- Use disposable gloves when cleaning cages, litter boxes, animal pens and fish tanks.
- Clean cages, litter boxes and animal pens daily. Throw out dirty litter in a plastic bag. Pregnant women should not touch cat litter boxes.
- Do not use pet waste as fertilizer.
- Cover your child's sandbox after play. Cats like to use sandboxes as litter boxes.
- Wash your hands well with soap and hot water for 20 seconds immediately after handling, petting or cleaning up after animals (especially reptiles). Use disposable wipes or hand sanitizing lotion if there is no soap and water.
- Do not let your pets eat raw meat, drink from the toilet bowl, dig through garbage or eat garbage.
- You and your pet should avoid contact with wild animals and rodents and their feces.
- Always wash your hands well with soap and hot water for 20 seconds:
  - after touching your pets
  - after touching your pet's food, treats or toys
  - before you prepare or eat food
- Keep pets away from food preparation areas.



# **Safeguarding Canada's Food Supply**

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is the Government of Canada's regulator for food safety, animal health and plant protection.

Food safety and consumer protection are essential to the health of Canadians. At the CFIA, the safety of Canada's food supply is central to everything we do.

**For more information on food safety,  
visit the Canadian Food Inspection  
Agency website at**

**[www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)**

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